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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5356
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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
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STATE FOR WHA/BSC, INL/LP (JIM HIDES)
EB/IFD/OIA
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR LAC/AA
STATE PASS TO USTR FOR LYANG
NSC FOR SUE CRONIN
TREASURY FOR OSIA MAUREEN WAFER
TREASURY FOR OTA WARFIELD, VAN KOCH, MILLAR
COMMERCE FOR ITA SARAH COOK
SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: PARAGUAY POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC UPDATE FEBRUARY 10
- 16, 2007

REF: ASUNCION 0082

11. (U) SUMMARY:

- Paraguayan Prostitutes Detained in Spain
- Stroessner Era PNP Commissioner Sentenced
- Poor Conditions in Tacumbu for Prisoners
- Dengue Fever Update

PARAGUAYAN PROSTITUTES DETAINED IN SPAIN

12. (U) Spanish authorities raided a brothel in Cuenca, Spain, February 3 and detained 21 people, including 17 female Paraguayan prostitutes. The 17 Paraguayans are being detained on illegal immigration violations. Three perpetrators were also detained one Spanish citizen, a Paraguayan from Caazapa Department and a Colombian (no names were released). The women, according to Elida Romero in the Ministry of Women, are victims of TIP and all are over the age of 18. It is not clear at this point if the women will be repatriated.

STROESSNER ERA PNP COMMISSIONER SENTENCED

13. (U) Former National Police Commissioner Eusebio Torres Romero was ordered to serve house arrest for his responsibility in the torture and disappearance of brothers Rodolfo and Benjamin Ramirez Villalba in 1974. In addition, he was fined 50 million Guaranis (approx. USD 9,671). Judge Digno Arnaldo Fleitis granted house arrest versus confining Torres in prison because he is over 70 years old.

POOR CONDITIONS IN TACUMBU FOR PRISONERS

14. (U) Deplorable and unsanitary conditions at Tacumbu prison for prisoners prompted a 2006 plan to change those conditions and establish a separate psychiatric area within Tacumbu. According to recent reports however, that plan has yet to be implemented and mistreatment of prisoners persist. The government report notes that prisoners do not have adequate space to sleep and, in some cases, do not have a mattress. It also identified concerns for the mentally ill prisoners who are all housed in 2 rooms and have been largely

abandoned. Indeed, prison authorities do not even know the names of many of the mental patients being "warehoused" at the prison. The poor conditions at the prison has increased health concerns as well. There are currently 43 prisoners with tuberculosis and 6 with AIDS.

DENGUE FEVER UPDATE

15. (U) Paraguay, as of February 20, has 10,148 confirmed cases of Dengue fever, including 40 of the deadly hemorrhagic type, since early January. The outbreak is concentrated primarily in Asuncion and surrounding areas. Four people have already died from Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever, and the Ministry of Health has demonstrated a limited ability to address the epidemic. The Paraguayan government has martialled its financial resources as well as civilian employees and the military to assist in the eradication of the mosquito vectors in the past several weeks but the infection rate has continued to rise. The Ministry of Health has purchased 67 new fumigators to spray throughout the infected regions over the next few weeks. (reftel)

CASON